

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 IOE-00 CIAE-00 COME-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 0342

ACCRA FOR HOROWITZ

PASS LABOR FOR SEGALL, QUACKENBUSH, AVERY AND LINS-
ENMAYER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ILO, PLAB

SUBJ: ILO: DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT ON ARAB-ISRAELI
ISSUE

REF: (A) STATE 4508; (B) GENEVA 9294

1. SUMMARY: ILO DIRECTOR GENERAL BLANCHARD HAS
TURNED DOWN ARAB REQUESTS ASKING HIM TO CONTINUE
HIS FOLLOWUP OF THE 1974 CONFERENCE RESOLUTION
CONDEMNING ISRAEL. BLANCHARD'S REPORT RECOMMENDING
CLOSING THE BOOK ON THE 1974 RESOLUTION (REF B) WILL
BE CONSIDERED BY THE ILO GOVERNING BODY DURING THE
WEEK OF FEBRUARY 28. END SUMMARY.

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2. BLANCHARD TOLD US TODAY THAT BEFORE HE LEFT FOR
ROME ON JANUARY 17, HE MET WITH THE ARAB AMBASSADORS IN
GENEVA (EGYPT, SYRIA, TUNISIA, ALGERIA, KUWAIT,
SUDAN AND SOMALIA; AND REPS OF PLO AND THE ARAB LABOR
ORGANIZATION). EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR EL SHAFEI ACTED
AS SPOKESMAN BUT THE OTHERS PARTICIPATED AS WELL.
THE ARABS ASKED BLANCHARD TO WITHDRAW HIS REPORT TO

THE GOVERNING BODY IN WHICH HE RECOMMENDS AN END TO HIS FOLLOWUP ON THE 1974 RESOLUTION. BLANCHARD TOLD THE ARABS THE PAPER WAS ON THE GOVERNING BODY AGENDA AND OUT OF HIS HANDS. THE ARABS THEN ASKED HIM TO SUBMIT A SECOND PAPER, PERHAPS BASED ON HIS UPCOMING VISITS TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA (JANUARY 29 - FEBRUARY 5), WHICH WOULD INDUCE THE GOVERNING BODY TO KEEP BLANCHARD'S FOLLOWUP EFFORTS ALIVE. IN REPLY TO THE ARAB REQUESTS, BLANCHARD GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF WHAT HE HAD DONE SINCE 1974 AND WHY HE HAD REACHED THE CONCLUSION IN HIS REPORT. HE FLATLY REFUSED TO ISSUE A SECOND PAPER BECAUSE IT WOULD CONTRADICT HIS POSITION AND HAVE HIM "PLAYING THE CLOWN BEFORE THE GOVERNING BODY".

3. THE ARAB REQUESTS WERE MADE IN THE CONTEXT OF THEIR POLITICAL GOALS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. BLANCHARD TOLD THEM HE WAS NOT CONCERNED WITH A PALESTINIAN STATE OR OTHER MIDDLE EASTERN ISSUES. AS A FRENCHMAN, HE COULD UNDERSTAND THEIR ASSUMPTION THAT MILITARY OCCUPATION NECESSARILY MEANS VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS BUT AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ILO, HE WAS CONCERNED WITH ACTUAL CONDITIONS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY. HE COULD NOT "IMPLEMENT" THE 1974 RESOLUTION WITHOUT KNOWING WHETHER IN FACT ARAB WORKERS WERE BEING DEPRIVED OF THEIR RIGHTS. IF THE ARABS WERE SEEKING A POLITICAL EFFECT AND WERE SURE THAT ILO CONVENTIONS HAD BEEN VIOLATED BY ISRAEL, BLANCHARD URGED THEM TO INITIATE AN ARTICLE 26 ON FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION

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PROCEEDING; SHOULD THIS SORT OF FAIR AND DISPASSIONATE INVESTIGATION CONFIRM VIOLATIONS, A RESOLUTION BASED ON THIS CONFIRMATION WOULD BE INCONTESTIBLE AND CARRY REAL POLITICAL WEIGHT. BLANCHARD DID NOT GET A RESPONSE FROM THE ARABS TO HIS RECOMMENDATION.

4. BLANCHARD IS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE ARAB APPROACH WAS A GESTURE TO MOLLIFY THE SYRAINS AND OTHER ARAB EXTREMISTS AND THAT THE MODERATE ARABS, ESPECIALLY THE EGYPTIANS, REALLY PREFER TO CLOSE THE BOOK ON THE 1974 RESOLUTION. BLANCHARD URGED US TO GET SUPPORT FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS AND ESPECIALLY FROM THE EMPLOYERS TO ACCEPT HIS SUGGESTION TO END THE FOLLOWUP.

5. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH BLANCHARD MAY BE EMBELLISHING HIS REPLY TO THE ARAB REQUESTS IN ORDER TO MAKE HIMSELF LOOK BETTER TO US, WE BELIEVE THE BASIC POINTS OF HIS ACCOUNT ARE VALID. BLANCHARD COULD NOT AGREE TO THE

ARAB REQUESTS WITHOUT SERIOUSLY UNDERCUTTING HIS
PERSUAIVENESS IN THE ILO GOVERNING BODY. HIS IMPRESSION
THAT THE ARABS ARE GOING THROUGH A "SCENARIO"
OR PRO FORMA EXERCISE MAY BE CORRECT; THE EGYPTIANS HAVE
TOLD US INFORMALLY THAT DECISIONS ON ARAB STRATEGY IN
THE JUNE CONFERENCE WILL NOT BE MADE IN GENEVA BUT AT
THE ARAB LABOR ORGANIZATION MEETING IN MARCH. WHAT
THE ARABS WILL DO AT THE MARCH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING
BODY REMAINS UNCLEAR.CATTO

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